3

LOYAL AND ZEALOUS SERVICE

The Staff

The staff establishment of the museum grew very slowly indeed, and from time to time suffered serious setbacks associated with the economic depressions and wars that alternated through the long middle years of its history. Between 1873 and 1945, through the good years, the retrenchments and subsequent recoveries, the staff sometimes numbered four and seldom was more than 12. Only once, in 1912, had the numbers risen to 15.

It was the successive curators-in-charge, ultimately called directors, who determined the direction that the institution took and who simultaneously did the work of administrators, accountants, public relations and education officers and curators right up to the expansion of the past two decades. However, almost without exception, those who served under these men did so with loyalty and zeal, for without both the museum could not have operated and it may not have survived.

The Slow Beginning 1862-1893

At first, in 1862, in the Windmill on Wickham Terrace, there were the members of the Philosophical Society: the vice-president Charles Coxen and H.C. Rawnsley who, with taxidermist E. Waller, had given collections of birds and shells[1]. Probably Silvester Diggles, who was to be one of the society's honorary curators from 1869, was helping too. Elizabeth Coxen may have been there—arranging the shells. In 1868 they moved the collections down into the Parliamentary building in Queen Street after cases were damaged by rain in the Windmill. C. D'Oyly H. Aplin, formerly the government geologist for south Queensland, and his assistant, Hacket, worked there arranging and cataloguing mineralogical specimens from the end of June to September 1871. Despite Aplin's attempts to become the museum curator he was forestalled by Coxen, who almost certainly had a good prior claim and had friends in high places—the minister was a member of the Philosophical Society—whereas Aplin was a relative newcomer. However, the main reason was that although the government had requested that any geological specimens collected by government men and held by the Philosophical Society be handed over to Aplin for display, the Philosophical Society maintained that it was responsible for much of it until such time as a public museum was erected. So, in October 1871 the minister for Public Works did the next best thing. He satisfied the society's scruples by appointing its vice president—Coxen—as honorary curator of a public museum in the Parliamentary building[1,2] (see Chapter 4). Aplin, having been informed 'that the government is not prepared to incur any further expenditure for increasing the collection or for continuing my services'[3] was told to hand over the collections to Coxen. There were no other staff members—visitors were admitted by the parliamentary messengers[2] (see Chapter 2). Coxen's was the first official appointment to the museum. He worked there on his own until, in 1873, the government appointed a permanent officer, Karl Staiger, as custodian of the museum and government analyst, although Coxen appears to have had the primary responsibility for the museum until the board was appointed. The natural history and mineralogical collections must have been moved from the Parliamentary building to accommodation in the Post Office building soon after Staiger's appointment[4].

Coxen observed that revenue from Staiger's assay work between November 1873 and July 1874 was 'more than equal to the salary received by Mr Staiger'[5]. Despite his involvement with assays, Staiger was concerned about the natural history collections, complaining that he did not have appropriate reference books to identify zoological material (see

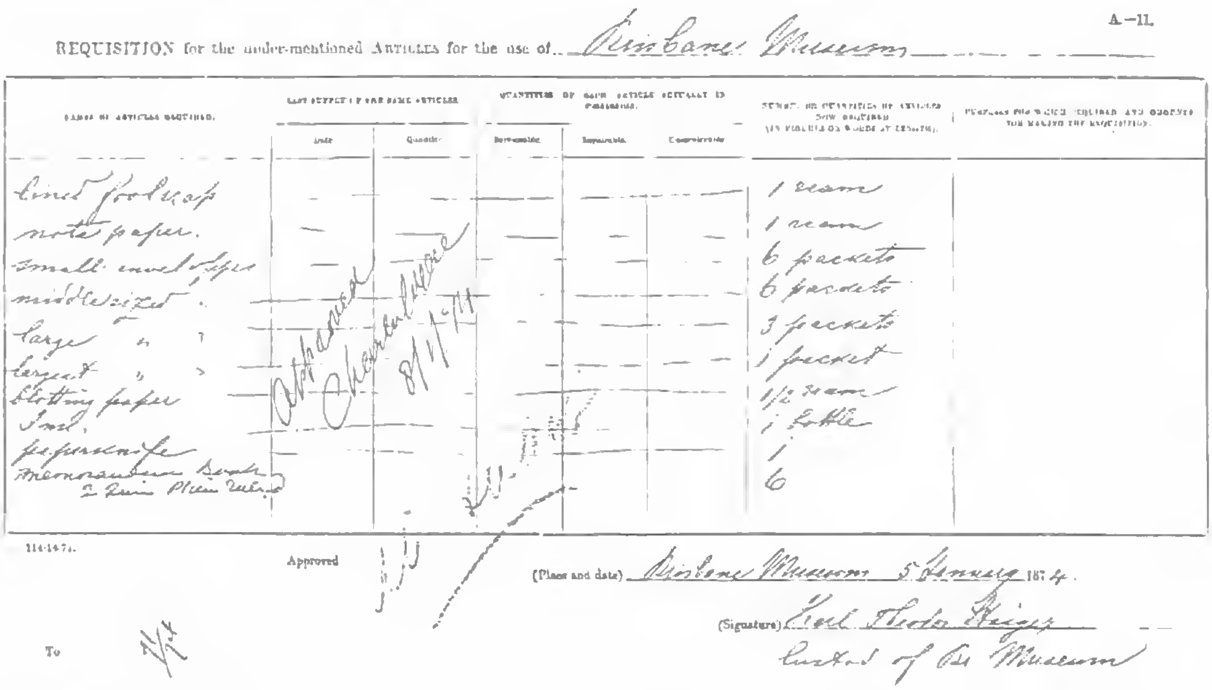
Previous page: Museum staff in the early 1920s. *Standing L to R*: A. Fenwick, librarian; William Baillie, attendant; Thomas C. Marshall, assistant preparator; A. Gorman, attendant; R.V. Smith, attendant. *Seated*: Eileen Murphy, stenographer; Heber A. Longman, director; Henry Hacker, entomologist. *Absent*: E. Varey, attendant.

Chapter 13). It was probably Staiger's efforts that made it possible for the trustees to comment that—

> In regard to the condition of the museum at the time the present trustees entered on their charge, they desire to record their opinion, that taking into consideration the great difficulties their predecessors had to encounter, the condition and arrangement of the collections reflects the highest credit on their administration[6].

When the board of trustees was appointed, early in 1876, Coxen had relinquished his role as honorary curator. At the board meeting of 21 March 1876—a few months before he died—he seconded a unanimous resolution that the government be asked to formally appoint Staiger as curator as he was 'at present performing all the duties of that office without the title'. Apparently Staiger, rather than the board, had taken over Coxen's duties. Nevertheless, Staiger's title was not changed—he

Charles Coxen, founder of the Queensland Museum and its honorary curator from 1871.


A—11.

REQUISITION for the under-mentioned ARTICLES for the use of Brisbane Museum

Articles	Quantity
Lined foolscap	1 ream
note paper.	1 ream
Small envelopes	6 packets
middle sized "	6 packets
large "	3 packets
largest "	1 packet
Blotting paper	1/2 ream
Ink,	1 bottle
pepper knife	1
Memorandum Books 2 Quire Plain ruled	6

Approved Charles Coxen 8/1/74

Approved

(Place and date) Brisbane Museum 5 January 1874.

(Signature) Carl Theodor Staiger
Custod of the Museum

To

Custodian Staiger's stationery requisition, authorised by the honorary curator Charles Coxen, 1874.

remained 'custodian'. Until relieved, in August 1878, by one of the trustees, Bernays, Staiger was also secretary to the board. Even the board minutes are in his hand up to March 1878, when a clerical assistant, Charles Chester, was appointed.

Also on the staff were an assistant, E. Curtis, who did the skinning and a museum porter/messenger, G. Walker. The board minutes of 8 October 1878 record that Walker was the hero of a fire—

> made by some person in the large fig tree at the rear of the museum premises which, but for the vigilance of the messenger, might have caused the destruction of the whole building.

After Coxen's death, on 20 June 1876, the museum trustees considered a letter from his widow, Elizabeth, asking if she could, at the price of a small remuneration, continue her connection with the museum, and offering 'certain boxes, bird skins etc. for sale'. She was remarkable for her time—the only woman who ever attended a meeting of the Philosophical Society and, in due course, the first to become a member of the Royal Society. She was to become a regular attendant at Royal Society meetings and once read a paper on cowries[1]. However, back in 1877, the trustees did not consider it appropriate that she should be appointed to the staff and, indeed, on 24 January 1877 they reacted strongly to that suggestion from the government, implying that it was an interference in a matter that was the board's prerogative. Instead, they set aside a sum of £50 for payments to her in return for her services 'at such times as migbt be found necessary'. Vouchers were passed for payments to Mrs Coxen from time to time until 17 February 1882. She was not only the first woman employee of the museum, but also the first person to be paid specifically to attend to the invertebrate collections. She appears usually to have been engaged in arranging the shells. However, she was able to help the trustees in many other ways, advising them on certain correspondence addressed to her late husband concerning museum business. For instance, on 6 February 1877 the trustees agreed to the wish of Mrs Coxen to send

'one of the bowers of the bower bird of which there are two on the premises' to a Mr Anthony of Harvard College in exchange for some bones. On 6 March 1883 the minutes record that while in England on a visit she had performed a commission for the board—she had purchased a stock of glass eyes for bird mounts. Long after that the meterological reports she compiled from her house at Bulimba are regularly acknowledged in the list of donations to the museum.

Coxen had been responsible for the work done by F.M. Bailey, keeper of the herbarium established in the museum in 1874 following a proposal from the Acclimatisation Society[7]. After Coxen died the position of the herbarium was somewhat anomalous. Although it had been under Coxen's control, it was not under the control of the board of trustees and the trustees decided that these anomalies should be corrected[8]. The board does appear to have had some control over Bailey from that time—endorsing his independent reports on the herbarium and formally approving some of his projects. The minutes of the meeting of 16th April 1878 record the resolution that 'Mr Bailey be requested to record all letters received or sent out by him in connection with the herbarium and to furnish a short monthly report of his movements and work'. Bailey, who appears to have been an ambitious man, was working hard for the development of the herbarium as something separate from the museum. On 1 September 1879, before the museum moved into its new building, he reported to the minister of Lands:

> Although I have not been requested to send in a report of the general state of the Queensland Herbarium, yet doubtless it may not be deemed wrong for me, as the grant for its formation will shortly be before the House, to furnish you with a few remarks relative to the department. I am pleased to say that the colonists generally look to this department as the highest botanical authority in the colony, and that they are continually applying for information regarding nomenclature, etc., etc.....I may state that a very large proportion of the Queensland flora has been collected together, named, and classified, so as to be of easy access for persons desirous of referring there to.
>
> I hope from the foregoing it will be seen that I have tried to lay the foundation of a useful Botanical Department, and that at comparatively little cost to the colony[9].

He goes on to say that he does most of his work at his 'private residence.....there being no room at my disposal at the present museum', that the museum building and the herbarium cabinets are totally inadequate, that he hopes his department will be allocated all the space it needs in the new building, and he asks for a free railway pass[9]. Bailey and the herbarium, moved to William Street a few months later with the rest of the museum (see Chapter 4).

Meanwhile, on 21 November 1879, just before the museum moved into its new building, the board of trustees had begun to look for a curator—they wanted 'a suitable man of scientific attainments'. William Haswell's name was mentioned by several of the trustees as 'although quite a young man (he was) already well known in scientific periodical literature.....'[10] and it was resolved to adjourn for a week to consult him. The trustees believed that he would be content with what they knew to be a very inadequate salary, but one that they could lay their hands on by diverting funds from those set aside for the collection. Fortunately they did not have to do that—Haswells salary of £200 a year was chargeable to 'unforeseen expenditure', pending a vote by the legislature[11]. Even Staiger as custodian

The gentleman here photographed with his wife is thought to be Karl Theodor Staiger, custodian of the Queensland Museum 1873-79 (by courtesy of Staiger's grandson, K.T. Staiger, of Palm Beach, Queensland).

had received an annual salary of £350, while the head of the Queensland Geological Survey was receiving £700 a year. Although Haswell did accept the low salary, he was assured that it was temporary.

At the end of 1879, after Haswell had been appointed, Staiger clashed with one of the trustees—W.H. Miskin. It appears to have been a rather contrived complaint that Staiger made. Perhaps, as Miskin suggested[12], he was disappointed at not being promoted to the top job in the museum. What Staiger did was to spread a story, through taxidermist Alder—who also may have wanted to discredit Miskin, that Miskin had taken advantage of his position as a trustee by misappropriating butterflies from some cabinets purchased by the board for the museum. Miskin established that he had bought butterflies refused by the museum in 1876, and that those purchased by the museum in January 1878 had not been removed either by himself or anyone else—although they had been lost through neglect. In fact, Miskin's comments about Staiger are not at all kind, and it appears that the custodian may have fallen out of favour with the trustees (see Chapter 14). Haswell took up the position of curator on 27 December 1879 and Staiger left, taking his chemical assistant, R. Taylor with him (see Appendix 1).

QUEENSLAND MUSEUM.

Brisbane, Nov. 16th 1880

Memorandum.

A monthly Meeting of the Trustees will be held at the Museum, on Thursday, 11 a.m. the 18th inst. at ~~2.30~~ p m.

William A. Haswell
Curator.

BUSINESS:

P. T. O.

Haswell calls a meeting to inform the board that he has been offered a position in Sydney.

To help Haswell establish the museum in the new building, an experienced taxidermist—E. Spalding—was appointed in June 1880 (see Chapter 4). There was a carpenter, Thomas Skinner, sometimes with an assistant and there were now two messengers, J. Cormack, who had been appointed in June, before Haswell arrived, and J. Lane who had succeeded Walker at the beginning of 1880. Haswell was secretary to the board and its proceedings are recorded in his youthful hand—the services of the clerk, R. Newton, having been dispensed with on the curator's arrival. The addition of a real taxidermist to the staff in place of Curtis who did the skinning in Staiger's time was undoubtedly an improvement, as was the additional messenger. However the museum's new building was very much larger than its previous home and there were still only five staff members and the keeper of the herbarium—not an overall improvement. Any hopes that might have been held for an expanding establishment were dashed when it become obvious that Haswell's salary would not be increased and he left in November 1880. At a special meeting of the board on 12 November 1880—

> the Curator stated that he had contemplated sending in his resignation as curator in consequence of the apparent determination of the Government, as expressed in the recent Parliamentary debate upon the museum vote—with respect to the salary of the Curator. He laid before the Board an offer he had received by telegraph of an appointment in the Australian Museum at Sydney at a much higher salary.

At a subsequent meeting on 18 November, the trustees deliberated at length upon the matter, and decided to inform the government that the curator's salary should be increased and—

> that unless such increase is sanctioned the Trustees will be unable to retain Mr Haswell's service or procure a competent person to act in his place and that under such circumstances the institution cannot be carried on either with credit to the Trustees or benefit to the public.

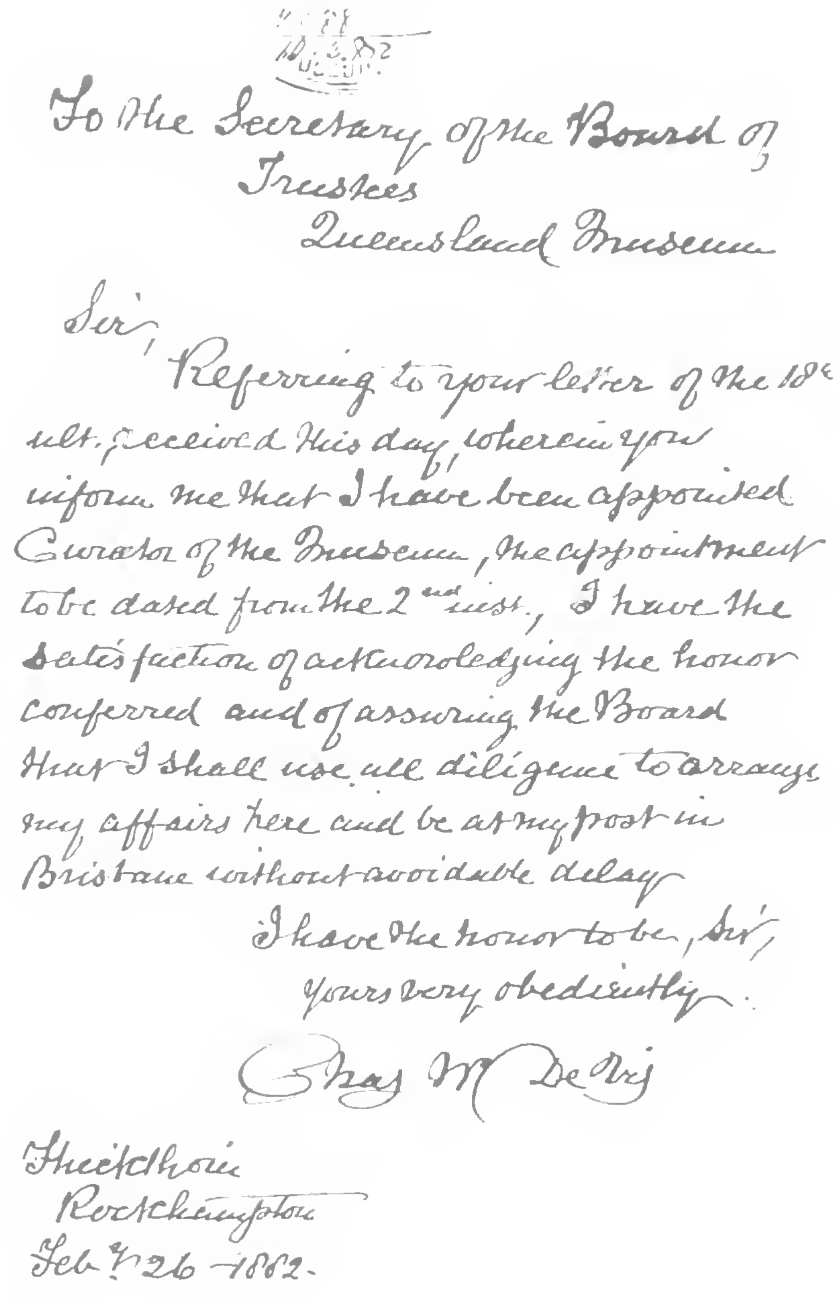
Then Haswell went to Sydney on leave. By 14 December he had resigned and the under secretary had appointed Bailey temporary curator. However, Haswell did not go immediately to the Australian Museum. He was a demonstrator in the zoology department of Sydney University in 1882; in 1883 he was acting curator of the Australian Museum while Ramsay, the curator, was away overseas; and in 1890 he was appointed to the chair of zoology in Sydney University[13-4]. As Mack has said, "it is probable that Haswell would still have gone to Sydney even if his salary had been higher"[15]. Nevertheless it was a disappointment that it should have happened in less than a year. During his short tenure he had begun to improve the library and the displays and had given the board and the community a new confidence in the museum.

All through 1881 F.M. Bailey, the keeper of the herbarium, was temporary curator. The taxidermist, one carpenter and the two messengers were the only other staff members. Bailey was also secretary to the board, which was, no doubt, a chore he could have done without. Nevertheless he appears to have done it meticulously. He was a prodigious worker and had built up a good reputation for his botanical knowledge. He collaborated with the Rev. J.E. Tenison Woods in producing a *Census of the Flora of Brisbane* published in 1880 and had held an appointment as botanist to the board inquiring into diseases of livestock and plants at the same time as he was keeper of the herbarium in the museum. He also travelled around the state—the museum board had eventually got him a

William Haswell, curator of the museum 1879–80.

free rail pass—building up the herbarium collections. The museum appears to have run smoothly while he was in charge but he was only a caretaker in the position and was more intent on advancing the cause of the herbarium than of the museum. Nevertheless, it is surprising that neither in T. Harvey Johnston's nor C. T. White's accounts of F.M. Bailey's life and work is there an accurate reference to his nine years in the museum. In fact, his surveys of poisonous plants, grasses and native pastures were all done while a member of the museum's staff[16].

Bailey's hopes for space in the new museum building were not realised. In October 1883 L.A. Bernays, who had been a member of the museum board of trustees in 1878–9, and had worked consistently to develop the herbarium, was to write:



10.3.82

To the Secretary of the Board of Trustees
Queensland Museum

Sir,
Referring to your letter of the 18th ult. received this day, wherein you inform me that I have been appointed Curator of the Museum, the appointment to be dated from the 2nd inst., I have the satisfaction of acknowledging the honor conferred and of assuring the Board that I shall use all diligence to arrange my affairs here and be at my post in Brisbane without avoidable delay

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Yours very obediently
Chas W. De Vis

Fheitthorn
Rockhampton
Feby 26 – 1882.

de Vis accepts the position of curator.

> I cannot conceive a more important Branch of Museum work (than economic botany)—with the assistance of Sir Joseph Hooker, Mr Bailey has made some progress toward an illustrative collection: which, however, I regret to find is, together with an Excellent Foundation for a Herbarium, gradually but surely being squeezed out of the Building, owing to insufficient accommodation for other branches of scientific illustrations[17].

Soon after this Bailey was to be appointed colonial botanist and would leave the museum taking the herbarium with him.

Meanwhile, before Haswell left, there were some rumours about loss of specimens during the move to William Street[18] (see Chapter 8). These rumours, probably compounded by Haswell's resignation, prompted the government to set up a select committee to enquire into the operation of the museum[19]. The trustees, in their annual report for 1882, thank the government for its response to their needs and it is probable that some of the improvements in the next decade resulted from this enquiry[15]. In fact the improvement started in 1881 when geology collector A. Macpherson was appointed.

On 2 February 1882 the 53 year-old Charles de Vis became curator on a salary of £400—exactly twice the sum Haswell had received. He was recommended by Mr Archer of 'Gracemere', just outside Rockhampton—where de Vis was then living[20]. The Rev. Tenison Woods who was then collaborating with Bailey on botanical works also supported his application[21]. When de Vis took over, taxidermist Spalding was still on the staff, as were the carpenter and the two attendants. Newly appointed as clerical assistant was an entomologist, Henry Tryon, who also looked after invertebrates[22]. Kendall Broadbent was engaged as zoological collector at £3 per week from May 1882 until March 1883. de Vis did not think they would be able to do without him, and indeed it was not long before he had created a vacancy to which Broadbent could be appointed. On 1 May 1883 de Vis reported that 'he had been compelled to suspend' messenger Cormack because—

> He came in a state of drunkenness to his post on Sunday last and after being sent home returned contrary to orders and still drunk.

Alexander Macpherson, the geological collector, was brought in from the field to replace Cormack and Broadbent was appointed collector in Macpherson's place. Broadbent was a zoological collector and he remained in that position from 1882 to 1893. By contrast there was a succession of geological collectors between 1882 and 1893—Macpherson, H.F. Wallman, E.B. Lindon, H. Hurst and H.G. Stokes (see Chapter 6).

From January 1885 Tryon's title was changed to assistant curator, but he continued with the clerical work until, in April 1887, de Vis reported to the board that—

> the assistant curators investigation into the life histories of the various insect and other enemies encountered by fruit-growers and into the means if any of preventing their ravages..... had made it impossible for him to prevent clerical work falling into arrears.

So the board appointed a young man, Henry Hurst, on trial and without pay, to assist with the clerical and library work. Hurst became geological collector on 5 August 1887 after Lindon left, but for the time being he also continued with the clerical duties. On 7 December 1888 'a supernumerary officer', Mr Charles Hedley, later of the Australian Museum, had been retained 'at the rate of £100 per annum' to deal with the Mollusca, thus releasing Tryon to work on insects exclusively.

However, Hedley only stayed a year before he went to Sydney.

It is apparent from the minutes of the board, and also from the letters sent to the curator from collectors in the field, that there was a general enthusiasm to increase the collections. Broadbent wrote from Herberton in northern Queensland with the information that Australian Museum collectors were 'in the district, so I am informed. Birds I think are new. I must send you *quick* to *name*'[23]. Henry Hurst, the shy, timid young geological collector wrote from Chinchilla that he was returning to Brisbane with 'nearly 3000 specimens'[24]. Money was never plentiful but somehow the collectors managed. An extra hand, Patrick Wall, was employed in October 1887 to accompany Hurst on a 70-day collecting trip on the Darling Downs. Hurst wrote to de Vis from Chinchilla on 5 November reporting progress and including a plea:

Charles Walter de Vis, curator/director of the Queensland Museum 1882–1905.

> Pat has begged to me to ask you to advance his wife a pound on account of wages. I don't know whether you are disposed to do so and I would not have troubled you had he not told me that she was next door to starving. If this is really the case it would be rather hard if she could not obtain it[25].

On 20 November, in another letter from Hurst telling de Vis of the fossils he is finding, the concluding paragraph reads—

> Pat tells me you gave his wife £2.18.0 instead of £1 and says he did not want her to get so much[26].

On 4 January 1889 de Vis reported that he had instructed Broadbent to collect insects as well as birds, mammals, reptiles and fossils. Broadbent replied that he would, but 'next season'. de Vis offered his Sunday allowance to pay an insect collector 'if a subordinate' could replace him (de Vis) in the museum on Sundays. It is not clear where the money to pay the subordinate would have come from had de Vis' offer been accepted. Instead, the trustees decided to appoint insect collector C.J. Wild. Then, on 5 June 1891, a 'boy assistant' to help with clerical duties, A. Preston, was appointed at six shillings a week to relieve Hurst and leave him free for mineralogical work. Thus, by 1891, in addition to the curator and assistant curator, there were two messengers, a taxidermist, a carpenter, three collectors, and a clerk/library assistant on the staff—the high point to that time.

On 5 June 1891 'inconveniences resulting from the decrepitude of the attendant, Alexander Macpherson, whose old age incapacitates him for the performance of the duties of his office' were reported, and he was replaced by Joseph Spiller. Hurst was dismissed toward the end of 1891 having abandoned his post—he had disappeared from Brisbane[27]. He was next heard of as a member of the South Australian Museum's expedition to Lake Callabonna, helping to excavate and retrieve Pleistocene marsupials, including the first complete skeleton of a diprotodon[28]. No doubt his experience as a geological collector on the Darling Downs was useful to him on this occasion. He was replaced as geological collector by Stokes.

Meanwhile, there had been problems developing in other departments of the museum. Tryon's relations with de Vis and the board had deteriorated from the beginning (see Chapter 9). A continuing source of friction was that Tryon's services were much in demand by the Department of Agriculture—conflicting with his work in the museum and undermining de Vis' and the board's authority. On 6 April 1888 the board minutes record that—

> the assistant curator absent from duty during most of the latter part of the month. No official intimation that his services were required elsewhere had been received, but it is understood that he has received instructions from the Colonial Secretary.

On 7 December 1888 the curator informed the board that—

> the official relations between himself and the assistant curator had been for some time strained in consequence of the disrespectful and antagonistic attitude assumed towards himself (by the assistant curator).

When the board suggested that a position of entomological assistant be created, de Vis, with alacrity, suggested that the position of assistant curator be dispensed with and the salary associated with it be transferred to the new position. It does not appear to be a device to get rid of Tryon, but to get rid of him as assistant curator. The trustees did not agree—they pointed out that as assistant curator Tryon was bound to accept de Vis'

directions and nothing would be gained by making a change in his title. So, they continued on together, the board reaffirming the curator's authority from time to time and insisting on its own initiatives in regard to Tryon's services to the Department of Agriculture. It was reported, on 5 July 1889, that Tryon had undertaken another report for the Department of Agriculture without the board's approval. It had, accordingly, withheld his salary for a month, and observed that he should be transferred to another department. On 3 January 1890 the board had intercepted Tryon's application, direct to the minister, for a railway pass—he was informed that the application would be made by the curator and he was reminded that 'all officers of the museum must address all official communications to the curator only from whom they will take instructions as to the work they will undertake'. Then Tryon tried to leave—he was an applicant for a post

Mrs Chas. Coxen
Care of
Miss Gould
33 Woburn Square
London

To the Trustees of the Museum
Gentlemen
If it is my intention
to leave Brisbane for six
months to revisit England
I hope to be able to
resume my duties at the
Museum on my return
If I can do anything
in the way of exchanges or
procuring the names of
shells I shall be very glad
to do so I expect to be back
in the colony before Christmas
I remain
yours obediently
Elizabeth F Coxen
Brisbane
April 7th 1882

Elizabeth Coxen writes to the trustees offering to execute commissions for the museum in London. She purchased a stock of glass eyes for bird mounts.

in the New South Wales Department of Agriculture in May 1890—but apparently was not successful. At one stage the board commented that the Department of Agriculture should get 'an officer of their own to do their work'. Neither the trustees nor de Vis were absolutely opposed to Tryon's expertise being used by other departments—it was an advertisement for the museum. What did irritate them was that the—

> services of the assistant curator had been repeatedly given to the Department of Agriculture which had published the resulting information on its own authority without giving the museum the slightest credit for it as its only source[29].

Eventually the board resolved that Tryon's services could be available to the department only if his reports were addressed to the museum board—for communication 'at option' to the Department of Agriculture[29].

Tryon was in effect, the agricultural entomologist for the state—a fact the board recognised when on 5 August 1892 it suggested that the department supply some funds to support these activities. When, on 2 September, that was refused the board refused Tryon's services. On 6 January 1893 a letter in that day's *Courier* concerning friction between the agricultural department and the museum was referred to by the board as 'not worthy of further notice'. The museum may reflect now that it is unique in Australia in having provided to its government, albeit reluctantly and unacknowledged, 10 years of sound advice for the pastoral industry through Bailey's work on poisonous plants, grasses and native pastures and followed this with a further 10 years of advice from Tryon on applied agricultural entomology.

Just before the economic collapse of 1893 Tryon was accused of being less than discrete in his behaviour toward a young woman in the public galleries[30]. It is clear that every effort was being made to establish some grounds for his dismissal. This was not successful. Tryon's defence was that he had been solicited. In those days, as in other museums in Australia and in the rest of the world, the museum, being open to the public, was a place often frequented by prostitutes (see Chapter 5). The charges against him were not substantiated and on 7 April 1893 Tryon's suspension was lifted. However, most of the trustees wanted him to be transferred and the chairman, Norton, just wanted him to go.

Kendall Broadbent, doyen of collectors, in the late 1870s (photograph lent by his grandson S.J. Rossner of Graceville).

The Desperate Years, 1893-1910

Then, a few months later, in June 1893, the economic depression descended inexorably on the museum. The minister asked the board to reduce its estimates and to consider retrenchments. The board avoided this, the minutes recording—

> that it did not feel it necessary to propose any change, either by dispensing with the services of any member of the staff or by the reduction of salaries, as it was generally understood that a reduction of salary throughout the service would be made by the government.

Ten days later, on 19 June, the only reply from the government was to repeat its request. Curator de Vis was asked to withdraw from the meeting, and on his return was directed to record resolutions dispensing with the services of the assistant curator Tryon, geological collector Stokes, attendant Spiller, messenger Lane, and carpenter Skinner. The zoological and entomological collectors—Broadbent and Wild—were to become attendant and messenger respectively. The board recommended that both Spalding and de Vis retain their positions; de Vis did, but apparently Spalding was retrenched with the others. There was a

suggestion that Spalding be retained for one day per week to keep insects out of the cabinets but there is no evidence that this occurred and five years later, on 5 February 1898, the board was to receive a letter from him seeking a job—there were still none available. It was a desperate time. Preston the young clerk/librarian, who was only paid 6 shillings a week, retained his job. de Vis' salary went from £400 to £300.

Actually, most of the trustees were not unhappy about the loss of Tryon but Bancroft always had dissented from resolutions that Tryon be dismissed. He did again on this occasion and his minority view was recorded:

> the inconveniences which he feared would result from the loss of the assistant Curator's services urging that they should be retained in the colony if not in the museum[31].

For a while Tryon was allowed to use a room in the museum and the library, although his use of the insect collection was to be supervised. Eventually, the board objected to him referring to his 'permanent room in the museum'[32] and he went to the Department of Agriculture, later becoming government entomologist and a very influential man in the state[32] (see Chapter 9).

So, de Vis, Broadbent and Wild, with the young clerk Preston's help, were left to run the museum. Preston left in 1896 and was replaced by A.J. Norris on 5 April 1897 and then G.H. Hawkins from 1898. Spiller was reappointed on 5 April 1897 to relieve Broadbent and Wild, so that they could do some work on the collections and occasionally get out into the field, and he stayed until 1902. Only once did the board have occasion to refer to his behaviour. On 27 August 1898 de Vis reported that a Mrs Kennet of Sydney had been offended by Spiller's behaviour in the gallery. The trustees observed that Spiller was of good character, the charge was not proven, and in future attendants should not engage in conversation with visitors except on the subject of the exhibitions. de Vis framed the following regulation:

> Grave inconveniences having arisen from attendants while on duty in the public rooms allowing themselves to be drawn into conversation with, or volunteering information to visitors. They are instructed to refrain altogether from addressing visitors except in the maintenance of order. They are required to confine themselves to brief but courteous answers about exhibits and they are warned to be especially careful to avoid making to each other, within the hearing of visitors, remarks which may be misconstrued and complained of as offensive.

During these years of economic stringency, when the staff consisted of five people, everyone did several jobs. The board minutes of 6 April 1899 record that one weekend the attendant, Spiller, and the clerical assistant, Hawkins, were given railway passes to the Darling Downs and Toowoomba to do some collecting but found nothing to collect; while Wild had collected 156 species on the range during his Easter holidays.

At the end of 1899 preparations were made to move into the Exhibition building. From 2 October two packers, three carpenters and four labourers were appointed to help with the move. Soon after, one of the labourers, Baxter, was dismissed—drunk—and the other two left before 3 March 1900. Just after the opening, on 26 January 1901, de Vis took the opportunity provided by the board meeting to express 'pleasure in being able to say that all employed in the reinstallation of the museum have rendered loyal and zealous service'. He certainly made every effort to keep them all in employment.

Dickson, the fourth of the extra hands, had become the night watchman. Unfortunately, on 1 January 1901 de Vis, who then was living in the caretaker's cottage near the railway line, found him asleep at 8 pm and again at 5 am the next morning, so he was dismissed and replaced with F.G. Smedley. The building was then in a rural setting—cows used to stray into the grounds[33]—and it must have been dark and lonely at night. On 30 March 1901 it was suggested that Smedley be supplied with a revolver 'for protection' on the advice of the police, but in April the Police Commissioner advised that it was not necessary. Of the three carpenters hired for the reinstallation, one, A. Norris may have been the A.J. Norris, clerical assistant, who had resigned in 1898. He did not remain on the payroll for very long. A.S. Russell stayed until April 1901 as assistant to J. Berry who became the museum's carpenter. The packers, Ern Lower and Joseph Lamb, became label writer-librarian and assistant messenger respectively; their appointments were approved by the government on 23 February 1901 at the same time as that of J.A. Smith as mineralogist—he had originally been hired on 31 March 1900 as an 'extra hand' temporarily engaged to prepare mineral exhibits. A gardener, W. Hedges was also appointed. It was the only time there was ever a gardener on the museum staff—probably the appointment was made to help J. Jordan, the head gardener, who was employed by the Department of Agriculture[34]. Broadbent and Wild were still the attendants and Hawkins the clerical assistant. Thus, at the beginning of 1901 the staff had again risen to nine—about the same size but not as well qualified as it had been when de Vis first became curator. It was also in 1901, on 23 February, that the board recommended that de Vis' title change to 'director' from 'curator'. Actually he had been so styling himself for some time.

There was a brief attempt to increase the professional staff by appointing J.D. Ogilby, a well qualified ichthyologist from Sydney who had been recommended by the curator of the Australian Museum, R. Etheridge jnr. It is said of Ogilby, who was a son of a distinguished British zoologist and had studied at Trinity College, Dublin, that he had an 'extreme and undiscriminating affinity for alcohol'[13]. It was on this account that he had been dismissed from the Australian Museum in 1890. He had worked on contract to that institution until appointed to the Queensland Museum where 'the fishes were said to have been kept in formalin rather than alcohol'[13]. Ogilby took up duty as assistant in zoology on 27 April 1901. On 29 June 1901 it was de Vis'—

> painful duty to report repeated grave misconduct on the part of the newly appointed assistant in natural history.....Monday morning he came on duty and remained all day secluded in his room. At 5 pm it was reported to me that he was still there and in so peculiar condition that he could not be induced to leave.

Ogilby resigned a month later and, despite his request, was not even given approval to use the laboratory. The board wanted to fill Ogilby's position, an ichthyologist being considered important to the fishing industry. A Mr R. Hall came from Melbourne and completed a probationary three months as assistant curator. The board recommended his appointment on 24 December 1901 but the minister would not approve it and Hall had to go back to Melbourne. Meanwhile Ogilby sought permission to work in the museum, refer to collections and use the library. Occasionally he was admitted but usually he was not. Then he was appointed as a 'supernumerary' to the museum as a result of an appeal he made to the Department of Agriculture. Payment of 30 shillings a week

was to be from contingency funds. On 14 November 1903 the trustees placed on record 'that this appointment was made without their knowledge' and next month qualified their acceptance of the appointment by making it 'subject to immediate retirement if such should be deemed advisable'. On 30 January 1904 the board decided that 'Ogilby's connection with the museum should altogether end', and subsequently it refused his request for a supply of foolscap paper. Nevertheless, Ogilby's connection with the museum did not end. He was to be appointed part-time ichthyologist in 1913 in the days of Hamlyn-Harris.

Economic recovery was slow and again, on 26 April 1902, there were retrenchments. Everyone lost his job except de Vis, Broadbent, Wild, and the so-called mineralogist J.A. Smith. This time the clerical assistant, Hawkins, also had to go. The staff was back to five. Later Smith resigned and Joseph Lamb—one of those retrenched—was given his job, again demonstrating de Vis' attempts to keep his staff in employment. The board allowed Wild to take the title 'entomologist'—in fact he was looking after the insect collection. By 26 July 1902 carpenter Berry was living in the caretaker's cottage, de Vis having found it too dusty and noisy. His part-time services as carpenter were retained, his accommodation serving in lieu of wages. de Vis made two attempts to return to the cottage—one only 5 months after he had left it and again on 26 September 1903. However, the board did not support him and Berry continued to live there with his family until 1910.

The retrenchments of 1893 and 1902 must have distressed de Vis, nevertheless he carried on, probably doing more himself and suffering a £100 cut in his salary, which increased slightly to £330 from 1902, but which was never restored to the £400 it had been when he was first appointed. It was supplemented with payments from contingencies for Sunday work—amounting to about £50 a year. On 28 May 1904 he certainly complained about the possibility of being deprived of the supplement at a time when his salary was reduced again to £300.

Despite the depression, the new museum accommodation and the small staff, de Vis continued with his research, managing the museum, and detailing every aspect of the institution's operations in his reports to the board. It was a time of remarkable expansion of the collections. There was the material that Broadbent and the other collectors had obtained in the 1880s as well as that from members of the public who had been alerted by de Vis himself to the intrinsic interest of the fauna and the museum's role to investigate and to preserve samples of it. There was material sent by those who had seen the monthly board proceedings published in the press and there was material from people with whom de Vis maintained a prolific correspondence and from whom he solicited donations. Ethnological material from New Guinea and the New Hebrides had begun to arrive in 1888 including the collections authorised by John Douglas—a museum trustee and special commissioner of the British Protectorate of New Guinea—and the large MacGregor collection.

de Vis' tenacity and his efforts on behalf of the institution were sustained over a long tenure with few rewards except those of seeing the institution's collections grow, and knowledge and understanding of the objects in those collections increase—mainly through his own efforts. He was confronted with a large, unknown and unique fauna. He had no literature and few colleagues with whom he could discuss his work, yet he was the museum's first really productive staff member and possibly the most productive up to the present time. He had an analytical and creative

mind. He was scientist, administrator and, if the need arose, a clerk. He was a humane and compassionate man and he kept the museum operating in the face of incredible odds. Mack has suggested that de Vis 'would have been happier in a secluded room describing fossil and recent vertebrate animals, rather than building up the collections of a new museum'[15]. There is no evidence of such an inclination either in the collections themselves nor in the energy that de Vis applied to every aspect of the museum's operation. However, Mack was right when he said 'there is no doubting his devotion to the work he had undertaken'[15]. de Vis set a standard of personal commitment and achievement for the museum that has been followed, though never surpassed. He was the Queensland Museum's great director.

C.J. Wild, acting director of the museum 1905–1910.

de Vis was retired in 1905 at the age of 76. On 31 December 1904 Norton, then chairman of the board, had reported on 'the exertions which he had for some years made to avert the retirement of the director'. It was not that de Vis wanted to retire—he didn't—but the trustees, who had confidence in him, feared, in the depressed economic climate of the time, that if they lost de Vis he would not be replaced. They had had a warning that this could happen when, on 28 May 1904, the chairman had reported a suggestion of the minister's that 'the Director might be "retired" and the museum put in charge of a person at a lower salary'. Norton, in reply, had told the minister—

> from previous experience that no such person could be found who would be competent to manage the Institution with efficiency and with the authority given by scientific standing

and that he, Norton, 'had spoken of the Director in very favourable terms'. Eventually, their fears were justified—de Vis was retired and was not replaced. On 26 November 1904 the Chief Secretary's Office ordered de Vis' retirement, which became effective in March 1905. He continued to attend at the museum and, to oblige the board, continued in charge of the museum—a course that did not please the department. Accordingly, on 24 June 1905, the trustees ascertained that Mr R. Hall from Melbourne—previously recommended to succeed Ogilby in 1901—would accept the position of director at an annual salary of £200. This would have left £100 for de Vis' salary as consulting scientist. The government did not accept that recommendation and on 26 August 1905 the board had to accept the government's appointment of Wild as acting director. de Vis stayed on as consulting scientist. A doorkeeper, B. McClelland, was appointed in September, presumably to strengthen the attendant staff, depleted by Spiller's retrenchment and Wild's promotion. The only other staff members were Broadbent and Lamb—the latter having become 'assistant in the industrial department' instead of 'mineralogist'.

This year and the next, 1905–6, were probably the nadir in the museum's fortunes. In July 1906 Benjamin Harrison replaced McClelland. In 1907 there was a breakthrough—W.E. Weatherill, described as boy assistant, was appointed in January; H.B. Taylor, office boy in April; and Anthony Alder was appointed taxidermist in September, Weatherill becoming his assistant.

Anthony Alder was an expert at casting. He had learnt his trade from his uncle, who had a taxidermy business, Alder and Co., Islington, London[35], and had won a gold medal for his models at the Greater Britain Exhibition, London in 1899. Alder had had a taxidermy and model-making business in Queen Street from 1877—the same year that he had first offered his services to the museum, only to be told that there was no position available. Instead, he had sold 22 mammals to the museum for £50. Only three years later Spalding had been appointed to the position of taxidermist. Spalding had worked for Ramsay, curator of the Australian Museum, who very likely had recommended him to Haswell. Alder, naturally, was critical of Spalding's work. On 1 July 1892 the museum board noted a—

> letter in the *Observer* over the signature of one Alder complaining of the quality of the taxidermist's work. It was considered a sufficient refutation of the charges made that Mr Spalding had been chosen by the New South Wales Commission for the Chicago Exhibition.....and that no notice of Alder's letter should be taken.

On 28 October 1905 the board received a letter from the Department

of Agriculture suggesting that Alder be employed. 'The trustees were opposed to employing him in the museum building, but will give him birds to stuff in his own workshop if he quotes satisfactory prices'. Perhaps Alder had a friend in the department, for, despite his long standing differences with the board, at last he was appointed to the staff of the museum at the age of 58. At the time of this appointment the board was under pressure. In April 1907 there had been strong press criticism of the museum displays and its standards of taxidermy, and then, one week before Alder was appointed, the premier had taken over the control of the museum and the board was about to be disbanded (see Chapter 14). In fact, Alder's appointment was probably that board's last contribution to the museum's operation.

From 1907 to 1910 the museum continued under Wild's directorship, now under the watchful eye of Premier W. Kidston. Apparently what he saw did not please him, because in March 1910 his under secretary, P.J. MacDermott, wrote seeking a reference for a Dr R. Hamlyn-Harris, then a school teacher in Toowoomba[36]. He received an entirely favourable reference from J.V. McCarthy of the *Toowoomba Chronicle*. No immediate appointment was made, however. Kidston, apparently feeling he needed some advice first, on 2 June 1910 wrote to the premier of New South Wales asking if Robert Etheridge jnr, the curator of the Australian Museum, would be available to investigate the Queensland Museum and report to him. In his report[37] Etheridge admired some of the material, especially some of the fossils and the 'fine MacGregor collection', but was critical of the building, the lack of labels, crowding of specimens, inadequate display furniture, arrangement of the material, preparation of the specimens, registration, storage, the level of staffing and the staff themselves:

> During my investigation I found one officer performing no less than eight different classes of work, some professional, some mechanical, some pure labour. I venture to say that under circumstances of this nature it is impossible for an officer so situated, no matter how earnest he may be, to carry such multifarious duties to a successful conclusion[37].

Mack remarks that the report was fair and informative[15]. Indeed, Etheridge's descriptions of the collection reflect the remarkable increase in its size and confirm that the dimensions of the task had been quite beyond the capacity of de Vis, his successor Wild and their pathetically small staff.

Etheridge was not impressed with Wild, nor with Broadbent whom he thought to be 'upwards of 77 years of age'—actually he was 73. The other attendant, B. Harrison, a cotton spinner by trade, was then 70. The 18 year-old H.V. Chambers, clerk/librarian, who had replaced Taylor, was described as having only a very elementary knowledge of library work. Etheridge thought the 19 year-old Weatherill to be a bright young man. The only other person to impress Etheridge was J. Lamb, a painter by trade, who, although assistant in the industrial department, had the following duties:

> He prepares and articulates skeletons; prepares collections for schools, prints labels, reproduces specimens by casting, curates the collections of minerals, rocks and fossils, assists in skinning large animals and takes his share of the cleansing duties. He is making a special study of Spiders and Frogs[37].

Lamb's office in the basement was the only one that Etheridge found reasonably tidy. Despite Etheridge's admiration, Lamb left the museum in 1910. The taxidermist, 61 year-old Anthony Alder, although on the staff at the time is not mentioned in Etheridge's report at all.

A Partial Recovery 1911–45

Ronald Hamlyn-Harris was appointed curator on 1 October 1910. He appears to have had the government's support to put Etheridge's recommendations in train. However, his salary was not exactly princely. Although it was to rise to an equivalent of nearly £500 by 1913, on appointment it was £300. His accommodation—in the cottage by the railway line—was valued at an extra £50 per annum. There was no longer a board of trustees and the director was responsible directly to the premier. Hamlyn-Harris visited other Australian museums before he began his task of reform in Queensland and Etheridge continued to advise. The expansion, begun in 1882 and so sadly interrupted by the depression of 1893, now resumed. The new director began to reorganise every aspect of the museum's operation.

Ronald Hamlyn-Harris, director of the museum 1910–1917.

Heber A. Longman, a natural historian known to Hamlyn-Harris, joined the staff as assistant curator and Henry Hacker was appointed entomologist. Later, in 1913, J.D. Ogilby was appointed again, this time as part-time ichthyologist, and he did some good work. He also inspired the new cadet, Tom Marshall, to a life-long interest in ichthyology. Veterinary surgeon D.R. Buckley was part-time osteologist for a short time but it was not a successful appointment—Hamlyn-Harris opposed his reappointment, even as an honorary, believing him to have been using the institution for 'self-advertisement'[38].

The first full-time stenographer Eileen G. Murphy was also appointed in 1911, as was a librarian, Clarice Sinnamon. Alder was still employed and helping him were M. Colclough—replacing Weatherill—and the cadet T.C. Marshall. B. Harrison was elevated to chief attendant on £90 per annum[39], Broadbent, who had died in office, was replaced and two additional attendants were appointed. One of them, W.E. Greensill, doubled as a carpenter—Berry having left. In the general revitalizing that Hamlyn-Harris initiated Finney Isles and Co. tendered information on new uniforms for the museum's attendants[40].

C.J. Wild, no longer acting director, accepted his old position of collector[41]. However, he did not impress Hamlyn-Harris, and on 12 June

The staff of the museum, 1912. *Standing L to R*: 'Chips' Greensill, attendant/carpenter; William Baillie, attendant; Henry Hacker, entomologist; Eileen Murphy, stenographer; Clarice Sinnamon, librarian; Anthony Alder, taxidermist; Benjamin Harrison, chief attendant; E. Varey, attendant. *Seated L to R*: Heber A. Longman, assistant scientist; Ronald Hamlyn-Harris, director; James Douglas Ogilby, ichthyologist. *Reclining*: Tom Marshall, cadet.

Eileen Murphy who gave 42 years of service to the museum. *Above*: as a young woman; *left*: after her retirement, with T.C. Marshall and M.P. Beirne, head attendant.

1911, four days after a fire had destroyed his camp, he wrote offering to accept a transfer (see Chapter 9). His connection with the museum ended on 31 June 1911[42]. Hamlyn-Harris used the position of collector left vacant to appoint Douglas Rannie as ethnological collector. Rannie, who later became librarian, lived in the caretakers cottage from 1912 after Hamlyn-Harris vacated it. R.J. Cuthbert Butler, who was librarian from 1915 to 1917, took over the house from Rannie when he left.

Thus Hamlyn-Harris had achieved a staff of 15—a new record. He also extended the scientific strength of the museum by appointing honorary scientists—Professors H.C. Richards and T. Harvey Johnston and Dr A.B. Walkom of the University of Queensland, and Dr J. Shirley.

Many of those appointed by Hamlyn-Harris went on to render long service to the museum. They were Eileen Murphy, Tom Marshall, Henry Hacker, Heber Longman—who subsequently became director—and the attendants J. Baillie and E. Varey. Eileen Murphy was only 20 when she was appointed and she was not only the first woman to be appointed to the permanent staff but was also the first stenographer. She was to occupy that position for 42 years, serving three directors—Hamlyn-Harris, Longman and Mack. Her duties were not confined to secretarial ones—she registered specimens, wrote labels and compiled catalogues. Her distinctive and decorative, though not readily legible, hand is still to be found on many museum labels.

During his tenure Hamlyn-Harris instituted educational programmes, revitalised the displays, organised the library and sought ways to redress the lack of scientific staff. However, in the end, his efforts to develop the museum were defeated by World War I. When he retired in 1917 he had lost the position of collector, Alder had died in 1915, Marshall was away with the 13th Australian General Hospital Unit and ichthyologist Ogilby, although he was continuing to do good work, was getting toward the end of his useful days. Staff members who left were never replaced nor had any new positions been created. In addition to the director and the assistant curator, there were the entomologist Hacker, librarian Cuthbert Butler, stenographer Eileen Murphy, preparator Colclough, three attendants and the head attendant and doorkeeper, Harrison. Although Harrison was 'fully capable of the work that was required'—Longman attesting to his vitality on the basis of his recent marriage—he was now almost 78 years old[43].

Heber Albert Longman, director of the museum 1918–45.

Longman became director in 1918 but he was not replaced as assistant curator. Hacker continued as entomologist until 1929 when he was seconded to the Department of Agriculture, and worked at the museum only one or two days a week[44]. He was succeeded by H.L. Jarvis, seconded from the Department of Agriculture for one day a fortnight. From 1918 A. Fenwick not only took over from Cuthbert-Butler in the library but also moved into the caretaker's cottage near the railway line. J. Shirley became conchologist for one year in 1920–1 and Ogilby worked on as part-time ichthyologist until 1920. The affection generally afforded Ogilby is reflected in a letter from Longman to the under secretary, Chief Secretary's Office, enclosing a medical certificate, seeking approval to pay for medicine and suggesting 'for our veteran ichthyologist Mr J.D. Ogilby three weeks holiday at the seaside, without expense, in charge of a friend'[45]. There was, for a short time before World War II, the promising assistant in ethnology, G. Jackson—who subsequently was killed in action in the war. Filmer observed, in 1946, how Longman grieved for him, and that signs of Jackson's—

> good work are in evidence all over the court. Any death in a New Guinea jungle is a sorrowful thing; his, as Mr Longman says, a real tragedy[46].

Colclough and Longman did not get on well—and this may have been partly political. Mrs Longman was a member of the party in opposition while Colclough supported the Labour government. Between October 1917 and June 1919 Colclough was seconded to the University's zoology department to work on ticks. In 1931 Longman, basing his action on the need to reduce running costs, abolished his position[47]. Colclough was retrenched but subsequently was reinstated in November 1933. Longman wrote that although Colclough was given the—

> maximum of consideration..... his lack of interest in his work, his cantankerous attitude generally, and his want of energy prevented him from being the useful officer that a taxidermist should be[48].

Indeed he was not a useful officer. He had withdrawn to a seat between the bird cabinets in the basement. In April 1945, soon after he was appointed as an assistant, Ivor Filmer recorded an occasion on which Colclough was to make a skin—

> but swore volubly.....at having to get off his seat between the bird cabinets to do it[46].

Colclough was absolutely unrelenting in his attitude—he just would not work for Longman. He said 'the only good thing Longman did was that he never begat any other Longmans'[46]. In Filmer's understatement 'the two were incompatible'[46].

Despite Colclough, the museum was a happy place in Longman's time. He was good to his staff and fostered in them an involvement and loyalty to the institution and an interest in natural history. Under Longman's direction, Marshall had developed his skills, and the improvement of the displays, begun in the days of Hamlyn-Harris, had continued. The museum was also a mecca for local and visiting naturalists. Entomologists A.J. Turner, H.G. Barnard, E.H. Rainford and G.H.H. Hardy worked there in an honorary capacity, as did palaeontologist J.E. Young and conchologist H.W. Hermann. In 1942 Marshall was seconded to the Department of Harbours and Marine and subsequently became ichthyologist in that department. Ivor Filmer replaced him in December 1944. His duties were many—Filmer, as a young assistant in the museum at this time, did almost every job there was to be done. He cleaned and fumigated display cases and spirit tanks, ran messages, arranged displays, labelled specimens, filled up jars, made catalogues, registered acquisitions and identified specimens—sometimes with Longman's help, but often he had to do it on his own. When Longman was away he answered most of the public enquiries. When Miss Murphy was away, he was clerk as well.

One of the attendants in Longman's time was R.V. Smith who, like Longman, was a free thinker and a Rationalist, and who was a highly respected member of the Brisbane community. Born in Belfast, he was a

Museum staff, *circa* 1916. *L to R*: Cuthbert Butler, librarian; Heber A. Longman, assistant curator; Eileen Murphy, stenographer; James Douglas Ogilby, ichthyologist; Henry Hacker, entomologist; Tom C. Marshall, assistant preparator cadet; William Baillie, attendant; Benjamin Harrison, chief attendant; gardeners—Jordan, Archbold and Spalding.

museum attendant until his death in 1932 at the age of 43. Both Longman and Tom Marshall were pall-bearers at his funeral and long obituaries in the Brisbane press are glowing in their praise of the man and the work he had done for the Labour party, the State Service Union and the Worker's Education Library[49].

Michael Beirne, another attendant appointed by Longman had a long distinguished record in office in the museum from 1925 to 1959—his tenure almost spanning that of two directors, Longman and Mack. Beirne's feat in chasing two youths who had stolen gold nuggets from the display is remembered to this day by the attendant staff. It was a long chase, through Victoria Park to Leichhardt Street, where the 'badly winded' miscreants were caught[50].

Longman achieved international recognition for his scientific work on vertebrate palaeontology. He made another significant contribution to science. In these years of economic stringency many Australian scientists were parochial and jealous of the competitive advantages available to better funded overseas institutions and scientists who came on expeditions to Australia, and visitors' collecting activities often were resented (see Chapter 8). However, Longman believed that science was international, that overseas naturalists should be encouraged to work in Australia, and he provided very real assistance to those who did (see Chapters 7, 8). It is a testimony to his objectivity and scientific integrity that he continued to do this even after the visit of the 1931 Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology palaeontological expedition. A lesser man would certainly have been jealous of the treasures that the American were removing. They were treasures representative of a fauna that he was investigating and they came from locations that he already had sampled. Longman, far from being jealous shared his knowledge with these colleagues from abroad and guided them to the fossil sites with his never-failing gentle courtesy (see Chapter 7). During his tenure as director, the Queensland Museum was a base for the 1923–5 British Museum Expedition to tropical Australia as well as the Harvard expedition (see Chapters 13, 7 respectively). Longman also supported Archbold's collecting activities on behalf of the American Museum of Natural History and he provided facilities and support for Gabriele Neuhäuser who in 1837–8 was collecting in north Queensland for the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin (see Chapter 8).

In the local community Longman established the museum's authority in natural science and, largely through his newspaper articles, he did much to encourage and foster scientists and naturalists in Queensland and to promote an interest in the state's fauna and flora. In fact, during his years as director, the museum had better public relations than it has ever had before or since—a fact to which the museum's cuttings books attest.

It is doubtful that all this made up for the inefficiency and even neglect in the actual curation of specimens. Filmer records that he was cleaning out tanks in the spirit room and—

> made an interesting experiment by filtering our formalin, as it was very cloudy. The residue was a white powder..... (which) turned blue litmus red, but this did not seem to prove anything other than it was an acid[46].

Mrs Grichting—the librarian—and Longman, in a tea-room conversation, disagreed about what the white powder could have been. No one seems to have been very concerned that the preservative they were using was acid—perhaps no one knew how damaging it was. A Public

Service Commissioner's enquiry in 1929 recommended that a scientist be appointed to assist the director when 'the opportunity arose'[51]. It never arose—it was the beginning of the 1930s depression, and, in any case, Longman himself was not very persuasive (see Appendix 1). For most of his tenure he ran the museum with only four attendants, two preparators, a librarian, a stenographer and a part-time entomologist. In the late 1930s there was a successful education extension programme with funds from a Carnegie grant but it did not continue after the two year period of the grant (see Chapter 5). Filmer suggests that the fact that there had been no funds to improve the museum during Longman's years—

> was not so much a reflection on his (Longman's) own efforts, but rather an index of the cultural desert that appears to be characteristic of so much of Australia until comparatively recent times[46].

Whatever the reason, it was almost at an end and a new era was about to begin. Longman, after 27 years in office, was looking for a successor, and, on 14 August 1945, World War II ended. Filmer recorded the receipt of that news:

> A unique day in our history, and in my life. Peace was officially announced at 9.30 this morning, and at the museum we received the news with joy. The attendants rang the bell, shouting "Hooray!" through the galleries, and Mr Longman and I found an old Balinese gong which we banged and made a loud ringing noise outside the back door, but there was no one there to hear us[46].

The Beginning of a new Era 1946-64

George Mack became director in February 1946. He came to an institution that was respected in a few specialised areas of science—in vertebrate palaeontology and in some aspects of entomology—and an institution that was regarded, with affection, by the Queensland community as an authority in matters of natural history. However, apart from the entertainment afforded by its displays, the museum's educational role was not generally recognised at all nor was the real significance of its collections, which were neglected—many items irretrievably so. During his tenure Mack improved storage and care of the collections and promoted the educational role of the museum—he instituted school programmes and concerned himself with the educational content and quality of the displays. Primarily to help him achieve these improvements, he gradually increased the staff levels. D.P. Vernon and M.E. McAnna, assisted by K. Keith, succeeded Colclough and Marshall in the preparatorial section. From 1947 one, and later two artists were appointed, and from about 1955 there were two assistants in the library instead of one. A photographer R.V. Oldham, was also appointed in 1955. Assistants were appointed in zoology, entomology, molluscs and ornithology. In 1948 the number of attendants was increased from four to six, and in 1960 to eight. Also in 1948 a clerical assistant for Eileen Murphy, E.J. Bingham, was appointed. However, the scientific strength of the institution was barely an improvement on what it had been in Longman's time. J.T. Woods was appointed as assistant curator in geology in 1948 and much later, in 1963, a second professional position was created when E. Dahms became curator of entomology. Mack also appointed an assistant in anthropology, M. Calley, but it was not a successful appointment and he didn't try again (see Chapter 10).

For the whole of 1946 and most of 1947 there was cleaning, tidying, fumigating, shifting, and everyone was involved, even Colclough, who at

first seems to have cooperated better with Mack than he had with Longman[46]. In the end, there was disagreement about the arrangement of cases in the galleries and Colclough left just before Vernon arrived on 20 September 1946. Two weeks later he was back, helping with the clean up as an honorary worker[46]. However, the next March he fell out with Mack and Vernon about the mounting of birds in the new displays and he appears to have left for ever. Meanwhile, the tidying up went on.Mack and Vernon came into the museum firmly determined to clean it up—and indeed they did. For those staff members who had continued through from Longman's days the new team from Melbourne at first were not appreciated. They were always moving things. When Filmer asked Mr Beirne what he thought of all the removing of exhibits that was going on, Beirne replied 'all changes aren't improvements'; and—

George Mack, director of the museum 1946–64, with Bob Dyer, Australian radio personality and amateur sports fisherman.

> Mr Beirne said that Mr Mack was excited about what he saw in Adelaide (where he had attended the 1946 meeting of ANZAAS)— so much activity, even the attendants going round with paint brushes. Mr Beirne did not think that was such a good idea[45].

Nevertheless, Beirne and the other attendants were all part of the team who helped with the reorganisation of the museum at this time. Conservative about the changes at first, they eventually got used to the new regime; and for some there were definite improvements—Filmer particularly enjoyed the field trips:

> 10 March 1947:..... it was a feeling of great pleasure to be off on a collecting trip in official time.....
>
> 25 July 1947:.....these outings for perches are a real treat[46].

Many times over the next year Filmer with Vernon or McAnna made expeditions usually to collect perches for bird displays. They would catch the train from Brunswick Street to Mitchelton and then walk to Samford Road or to Ferny Grove, sawing off the logs they needed and carrying them back to the station in sacks. Increasingly Filmer found himself helping Vernon and McAnna with taxidermy:

> 24 March 1947: an important day in my career—tackled my first skin[46].

George Mack was an exacting task master. He inspired loyalty in those who stayed long enough to understand him—but many did not stay that long. Miss Murphy was reduced to tears on more than one occasion and Betty Baird, the librarian, left the museum in May 1947—only six months after she had started—because of Mack[46]. His irascibility often made him a difficult man to deal with and may explain some of the departmental neglect that the museum experienced at his time. A characteristic incident occurred when he was conducting a breeding experiment with a colony of marsupial rats, *Dasyuroides byrnei*. Rhodes, the zoology assistant at the time—whose job it was to care for the rats—had left, and Mack ordered the attendants to see to them. Len Taylor volunteered to do the job, but Mack insisted that he had issued an order and had not asked for a volunteer, and promptly served them all with dismissal notices. What really had been troubling Mack was that he needed a roster that would ensure the colony was cared for over the weekend. However tempers had become frayed before that could be explained and the situation was resolved only after the Union was called in. A roster was organised, the rats were fed, Mack said nothing more about it and no one actually left the service of the museum.

Filmer suggests that 'in his "high noon" of reorganisation denigration and re-furbishing Mack was misunderstood by many people'[46]. Indeed he was—although most people thought he was merely pig-headed and irascible, he was trying to stop the decay that 50 years of neglect had brought about. Nevertheless it was not only unfortunate that 'good relations with Longman could not be entertained', but also that his relations with so many people were affected because 'bluntly.....he was not mature enough to assuage his forthright personality and bad temper'[46].

In May 1956, Mack wrote to the Director-General of Education, asking permission to apply for a Carnegie travel grant. He wanted to visit America and Europe—

> 1 to observe and study display, educational and other museum developments.....

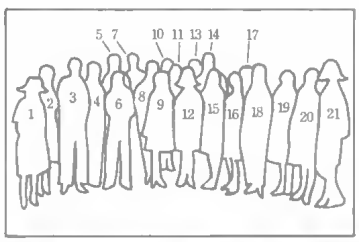
2 to prepare a suitable plan for a possible new Queensland Museum building based on my own experience and on observations and discussions abroad.

3 to learn at first hand the uses made of radio and especially of television by museums in the field of education[52].

Cabinet was 'in no way unsympathetic' to the request but 'considered that, in view of retrenchments at the present time, it would be advisable to defer the matter'. He never asked again. He died in office in October 1963 at the age of 64. It was just three months after he had written to the Public Service Board indicating that 'he would appreciate an extension of his term of office' after reaching the age of 65[53].

Mack presided over a staff increase from 9 or 10 to 26. However, the increase was due largely to the appointment of assistants and support staff. It is clear from correspondence that he tried very hard to persuade the government that he needed professional and technical staff, but he did not succeed in this.

One of the most astute things that Mack did, was to bring Vernon with him from the National Museum of Victoria. Don Vernon was to stay on the staff of the Queensland Museum for 36 years to become the second longest serving member—Eileen Murphy served longer, retiring after 42 years service. He was to be involved in the design and production of most of the displays developed between 1945 and 1970 and many of those developed in the 1970s and he brought modern techniques of sculpture taxidermy to Queensland. However, he was also an assiduous worker in the field. In the course of his tenure he was to undertake a diversity of projects for the museum including the production of the popular *Birds of Brisbane* in the Queensland Museum Booklet series, the initiation and organisation of a small museums seminar in 1978 (see Chapter 14) and he consistently promoted the role of museums and a respect for their collections. In his retirement he continues his assocation with the museum.



Museum staff 1965: Eileen Murphy (1), S. Gunn (2), J.T. Woods (3), C. Bowman (4), M.P. Beirne(5), J. Thomson (6), D.P. Vernon (7), E.C. Dahms (8), D.A. Wilson (9), M. Stegeman (10), T. Tebble (11), L. Haren (12), D.D. Chorley (13), B.M. Campbell (14), C. Corrie (15), P. Wipple (16), A. Easton (17), A. Bartholomai (18), E. Crosby (19), L. Elder (20), Mary McKenzie (21).

A New Deal 1964-86

Jack Woods, succeeding George Mack in 1963, was the first Australian-born and educated director of the museum. This was probably an indication of the political and economic maturity of Australia, whose institutions, from the end of World War II, were increasingly staffed by graduates from its own universities rather than from those of Great Britain. Up to this time doctoral degrees were not awarded in Australian universities and it had been customary for Australian graduates to go overseas for their professional training. Some returned, but mainly it was overseas graduates who had staffed Australia's maturing institutions. However, Woods rejected an opportunity to go to the University of California in 1953. Subsequently, as director, he was the first member of the museum staff to be sent overseas by the government to visit the museums of Europe and North America. Study tours and overseas study have long been a privilege of university staff members and the experience is generally regarded as an important factor in overcoming the isolation that is often experienced in Australia. The benefit had not previously been available to museum staff. The occasion signalled the public support and government recognition that at last were being afforded to the museum.

Jack Tunstall Woods, director of the museum 1964–68.

Woods appointment marked the beginning of the modern period in the museum's development. He was responsible for the appointment of curators of anthropology, zoology, ichthyology and reptiles, bringing the number of curators to five; and he appointed H.A. Sweetser to the history and technology section (see Chapter 11).

When Bartholomai became director in 1969 he inherited the strong infrastructure that Mack and Woods had put in place and proceeded to build on it. Perhaps he was fortunate that he came into office while the general affluence and expansion of the 1960s was still occurring—he certainly took advantage of it. All the Australian museums were expanding at this time[13], as were universities, and not only were graduates available to fill positions but also positions were being created in the museums. In Queensland, community support through the activities of the Hall of Science, Industry and Health Development Committee resulted in the enactment of the Queensland Museum legislation and the setting up of the board of trustees (see Chapters 11, 14). Thus Bartholomai had a lot of support for the expansion that he engineered. New curatorships were created in arachnology, molluscs, history and technology, higher invertebrates, lower invertebrates and subsequently in industrial archaeology, maritime archaeology, and lower entomology as well as a scientist in charge of materials conservation. Meanwhile, as assistants who had initially been appointed as cadets qualified for promotion, new curatorships were created in Australian ethnography, crustaceans, and amphibians and ornithology. These new positions, together with more assistants and very much enlarged prepartorial, art, education and administration sections comprised a staff of 101—the strength of the museum at the close of 1985.

Alan Bartholomai, director of the museum from 1969.

Now, in 1986, not only is the staff about six times its size when Woods took over in 1964, but also it is highly qualified and experienced. Travel, to visit and consult with colleagues is a normal event, not only for directors, but also for others on the staff. Now the museum is able to keep pace with changing philosophies and advances in science and technology, and it takes its place amongst museums the world over.

There are also members of the community who are contributing to the museum's operation. They are donors, volunteer workers and field

assistants, and consultants. The Hall of Science Industry and Health Development Committee, having initiated the museum's metamorphosis, sought a continuing role. It became the Museum Society of Queensland in 1971, and from 1985, with an increasing emphasis on its association with the Queensland Museum, it changed to the Queensland Museum Association Incorporated. F. Stanley Colliver, honorary museum associate and donor, is the association's foundation chairman. He heads a group of its members who volunteer their services to the museum on a regular weekly basis to help wherever there is a backlog of work to be addressed. It is one of the ways in which the public can interact with the staff in its care of the collections that, in fact, belong to every member of the community.

Museum staff 1984.

Museum staff, 1970. *L to R*: J. Utz, A. Bartholomai, H. King, B. Campbell, S. Hoare, R. Whitby, J. Covacevich, R. Monroe, P. Jell, J. Hodge, E.C. Dahms, J. Wilson, A. Sweetser, W. Balaam, M. McAnna, Mary McKenzie, E. Gehrmann, J. Wertz, T. Hiller, M. Quinnell, R. Hardley, E.P. Wixted, D.P. Vernon, A. Easton (cartoon by S. Hiley—seated).